



September 10, 2004

## **Providence man is sentenced to seven years in federal prison for gun offense**

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### **Nicholas Tetreault tossed a gun out of a car after a drive-by shooting**

A federal judge today sentenced **Nicholas Tetreault**, of Providence, to seven years in federal prison for being a felon in possession of a firearm. Tetreault tossed a handgun out of a car during a high-speed police chase in January that followed a drive-by shooting. Providence Police arrested Tetreault after he crashed his car into a telephone pole on Huntington Avenue.

United States Attorney Robert Clark Corrente announced the sentence, which Senior U.S. District Court Judge Ronald R. Lagueux imposed today in U.S. District Court, Providence. Tetreault, 21, of 224 Sackett Street, has a prior conviction for arson and, as a felon, is prohibited from possessing firearms.

In June, Tetreault pleaded guilty to being a felon in possession of a firearm. At the plea hearing, Assistant U.S. Attorney Lee H. Vilker said that the government had proof that, shortly after 11:00 PM on January 14, Providence Police received a report of gunshots being fired at 29 Ocean Street. A man there said that a man in a small white vehicle had fired shots into his car and garage.

Soon afterward, a patrol officer saw a white car traveling fast on Potters Avenue. The driver ignored the officer's attempt to pull the car over and led police on a high-speed chase.

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During the chase, officers saw the driver toss a handgun out the car's window. The car crashed into a telephone pole at the corner of Huntington Avenue and Homestead Street and police arrested the driver, identified as Tetreault. Police officers recovered the gun, a .22 caliber revolver.

Tetreault later admitted to police officers that he had fired shots at his cousin's car because he had heard that his cousin had threatened to kill him and, "I wanted to kill him first."

Tetreault was initially charged with state offenses and was subsequently charged federally after a joint review of the case by prosecutors from the U.S. Attorney's Office and the Rhode Island Attorney General's Office.

**Providence Police** and the **Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives** investigated the case. Assistant U.S. Attorney Vilker prosecuted it as part of **Project Safe Neighborhoods**, a Department of Justice initiative against gun crimes. Under Project Safe Neighborhoods, the U.S. Attorney's Office, working with Providence Police, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the Rhode Island Attorney General's Office, and other agencies, aggressively prosecutes federal firearms offenses in an effort to incarcerate those responsible for gun violence and deter others from committing gun crimes. Since 2001, federal firearms prosecutions in Rhode Island have more than doubled and have resulted in lengthy prison terms for gun offenders.

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